

CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD

NORTH COAST REGION

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EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

August 2006

REMEMBERING RONALD ALLEN



[Ron Allen 2006]

We lost a co-worker and a good friend last month. Ron Allen worked in the Cleanups Division and his Department of Defense sites were mainly in the northern part of our region. Ron truly enjoyed traveling and that was one of the reasons he enjoyed his job so much. Ron joined the Regional Water Board on March 1, 2001, as an Environmental Scientist.

If Ron saw anyone in need, he would quietly do what he could to help, no matter what the need may be. He never did things for the "thank you," he did them because he had a big heart and was a dedicated co-worker.

We had the pleasure of meeting Ron's two daughters Emily and Eileen and his son-in-law, Nick. We will miss you, Ron.

Update on the Mainstem Klamath River Conditions and TMDL Development

(Staff: David Leland)

North Coast Regional Water Board staff received word the week of July 17, 2006, that scums of blue-green algae have been observed on Iron Gate and Copco reservoirs. The Karuk Tribe continues to monitor this situation.

With the recent heat wave, water temperatures in portions of the mainstem have reached levels considered lethal for salmonids. The lower portion of the river, below Weitchpec on the Yurok Reservation, has seen particularly high water temperatures. The Klamath Fish Health Assessment Team is closely monitoring conditions, and will activate further responses of the Team as conditions warrant.



[Iron Gate Reservoirs, Klamath River]

Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) development continues. North Coast Region staff has been working with Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, US EPA Regions 9 and 10, and EPA's contractor Tetra Tech to develop a water quality model of the river from the outlet of Upper Klamath Lake in Oregon to the estuary within the Yurok Reservation. Calibration of the model to conditions in 2000 and 2002 is complete. Application of the model to develop a TMDL compliance scenario and TMDL load allocations is in progress. This process has taken longer than anticipated, with both technical and water quality standards issues requiring additional time and consideration. Working with EPA on this consent decree TMDL, staff is in the process of revising the Klamath TMDL schedule to account for these issues, as well as both requests for additional agency and stakeholder involvement in the process and the inclusion of our experience gained from the Scott and Shasta TMDL and Action Plan processes.

Regional Water Board staff will continue their ongoing environmental scoping meetings on the development of the Klamath River TMDL and associated Basin Plan amendment. A meeting was held on July 18, 2006, at 6:00 p.m. in Orleans, CA. The purpose of the meeting was to solicit public comments on the scope of potential environmental impacts of a temperature, nutrient and dissolved oxygen TMDL from stakeholders and residents on the main stem Klamath River. Previous meetings were held in Eureka, Yreka and Klamath Falls OR starting in February 2004.

The Scott River Watershed Sediment and Temperature TMDL Action Plan

(Staff: Holly Lundborg and Diana Henriouille-Henry)

The Scott River and Watershed Sediment and Temperature TMDL Action Plan and accompanying resolution (Resolution 2006-0046) were approved by the State Water Resources Control Board (State Board) on June 21, 2006. As part of the State Board's resolution, direction was given to Regional Water Board staff to develop for the Regional Water Board's consideration, a conditional waiver to ensure the TMDL Action Plan is in conformance with the State's 2004 Nonpoint Source Policy.

On June 29, 2006 the Scott River Watershed Sediment and Temperature TMDL and the associated administrative record (approximately 6,400 pages) were forwarded to the Office of Administrative Law (OAL). OAL has until August 11, 2006 (30 working days) to act on the TMDL Basin Plan amendment. If OAL has any questions or corrections that need to be addressed they will most likely be expressed to the State Water Board the week of August 7, 2006.



[Scott River]

The Scott River Watershed Sediment and Temperature TMDL and administrative record were also sent, by certified mail, to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on June 30, 2006. The EPA submittal has all the required elements, except the OAL approval letter, which is required before EPA can begin its review. The State Water Board has agreed to FAX, or e-mail a PDF copy of the OAL approval letter to EPA as soon as it is received. This should allow EPA to easily meet the end of the year consent decree deadline.

Regional Water Board staff have developed and internally circulated a draft work plan for the implementation of the Scott River TMDL Action Plan. Staff is preparing to distribute the draft work plan and to post it on the Regional Water Board's website in order to solicit public review and comments prior to finalizing and implementing the work plan.

In response to the State Water Board's concern that the Scott River Watershed TMDL Action Plan may not be in conformance with the nonpoint source policy, a conditional waiver was developed by Regional Water Board staff for the Regional Water Board's consideration at the August 2006 meeting.

Update on the Shasta River Temperature and Dissolved Oxygen Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs)

(Staff: David Leland and Holly Lundborg)

The North Coast Regional Board adopted the Shasta River TMDLs on June 28, 2006. Staff is preparing the administrative record for transmittal to State Board.



[Shasta TMDL area]

Staff is also beginning development of work plan tasks from the Action Plan.



[Shasta River]

Update on Salmon River MOU with the US Forest Service

(Staff: David Leland)

North Coast Regional Water Board staff has been working closely with staff of the US Forest Service to complete a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to implement the Salmon River Watershed Temperature TMDL.



[Salmon River]

A draft MOU is being reviewed by the staff and at the Forest Service. There are indications that the MOU could be ready for signing within the next several months.

Waste Water Discharge Requirements – Gualala Redwoods

(Staff: Fred Blatt)

The North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board staff is developing Watershed-wide Waste Discharge Requirements (WWWDRs) for timber harvest activities on lands owned by Gualala Redwoods, Inc., in the Gualala River watershed. The Gualala River is located in Sonoma and Mendocino Counties and is listed under the Clean Water Act, Section 303(d), as impaired for both sediment and temperature.

The Gualala River also contains anadromous salmonids, including Coho salmon that have been listed as endangered under both the Federal and State Endangered Species Acts.



[Gualala River, Redwoods]

The goal of the WWWWDRs is to address cumulative impacts from timber harvest activities, including roads, while GRI successfully manages their lands for timber production. The proposed WWWWDRs will provide a ranking system for planning watersheds according to the relative level of ground disturbance combined with landscape sensitivity.

The WWWWDRs require a level of characterization and mitigation measures proportionate with the level of disturbance.

The draft WWWWDRs are expected to be circulated to the State Clearinghouse and released for public review by August 16, 2006. The Regional Water Board public hearing is tentatively set for October 18, 2006.

Elk River, Humboldt County

(Staff: Mark Neely)

The second Watershed-wide Waste Discharge Requirements (WWWDRs) in Elk River, Humboldt County, are due to come up for consideration by the Regional Water Board at its August 9, 2006, meeting.



[Elk River Trail]

Green Diamond Resource Company is seeking permit coverage for their proposed operations in McCloud Creek, tributary to the South Fork Elk River. This follows the Regional Water Board's adoption last May of the historic WWWWDRs for Pacific Lumber Company in Elk River and Freshwater Creek, and takes a similar regulatory approach.

Enforcement Update

(Staff: Tom Dunbar)

The enforcement unit was formed in June 2005 and began to focus its efforts on reducing the backlog of violations that were subject to mandatory minimum penalties (MMP). ACL complaints were issued to most municipalities with wastewater treatment facilities in the North Coast Region. Many of these municipalities met the criteria for "small community," which allowed them to conduct compliance projects (CP) instead of pay the monetary penalty. Other dischargers and larger communities proposed to do supplemental environmental projects (SEP) in lieu of paying the monetary penalty.

During the past year, enforcement unit staff has met with quite a few of the dischargers who received ACL complaints to discuss their proposed CP and SEP. The goal was to describe projects and implementation schedules that would be in conformance with CP and SEP guidelines in the state Enforcement Policy. Our next wave of work is to bring all of the CP and SEP to the Regional Board for official approval in the form of ACL orders. Many of these ACL Orders are scheduled for adoption at the September, October, and December 2006 Regional Water Board meetings. These are non-controversial Orders, as both staff and the discharger have worked for several months toward mutual support of the CP and SEP.

New Administration Division Chief

The Regional Water Board is very pleased to announce that Linda Kryla has joined our staff and is heading our Administrative Unit. Linda comes to the RWQCB from the Department of Social Services in Rohnert Park where she was a Licensing Program Manager. Prior to working for DSS, Linda worked for the Department of Fish and Game as an Administrative Officer II, and has been a State employee for over 15 years.

Linda's background in administrative functions includes experience with many management, fiscal, and operational matters. She has extensive personnel, budget, contract, lease, business services, facilities operations, and labor relations experience.

Public Workshops

Staff from the SWRCB held two separate public workshops on August 1, 2006, at the Regional Water Board Offices in Santa Rosa. The discussion in the morning focused on regulations for storm water and non-point source discharges to Areas of Special Biological Significance. The CA Ocean Plan prohibits all discharges to these protected areas unless an exception is granted.

In the afternoon, the discussion was focused on staff's efforts to develop model ocean monitoring criteria. The discussion covered bacteria monitoring, toxics, benthic communities, mussel watch/bioaccumulation and ideas for regional monitoring.

A series of workshops and hearings are scheduled to discuss if and how exceptions may be granted for storm water and NPS discharges.

First Annual Spring-Run Chinook Confab July 27-29, 2006

The Salmonid Restoration Federation (SRF), in partnership with Pacific, Gas, and Electric and Friends of Butte Creek, hosted the First Annual Spring-run Chinook Confab, in beautiful Butte Creek. SRF offered this three-day opportunity for local landowners, restorationists, fisheries biologists and agency staff to participate in workshops on fish monitoring and identification techniques, to tour and understand restoration projects, and, through positive dialogue, to increase their capacity to positively impact the recovery of Spring-run Chinook in California.



[Chinook Salmon, Butte Creek]

Participants learned skills, methodologies, and techniques that they can share with others in an ongoing effort to help people help fish.

The primary goals of the Chinook Confab are two-fold. This new symposium will provide affordable technical and hands-on trainings for the fisheries restoration and water conservation communities to benefit Spring-run Chinook populations in California.

Additionally, this event will provide cooperative opportunities for landowners, agency biologists, and community restorationists to discuss issues and perspectives in Spring-run Chinook restoration and recovery in California.

Located in the Northern Central Valley, Butte Creek contains one of the last self-sustaining populations of Spring-run Chinook in California. The recovery of the Butte Creek Spring-run Chinook provides a unique opportunity to reinforce the importance of collaborative watershed planning efforts in the recovery of other imperiled Spring-run Chinook population in California.

Sol Fest – August 19-20

(Staff: Janet Blake)

The annual Sol Fest will be held in Hopland on August 19 and 20, 2006. The Regional Water Board will be well represented at this event. Staff will have an informational booth where staff will interact with the public on water quality issues.



[Sol Fest, Hopland]

Staff also has a new EZ up "instant shelter" for their booth this year. The Sol Fest always has a

large turnout – and it is expected that 10,000 people will attend this year.

Speakers this year include national political commentator Jim Hightower, Ed Begley, Jr., Caroline Casey, Betsy Rosenberg, John Francis, and Deborah Koons Garcia. Music headliners are David Grisman, Hot Buttered Rum, New Monsoon, and Vince Herman. There will also be fascinating workshops, children's activities, organic food, information booths, tours and more.

Monitoring Bacterial Sources and Transport in Five Northern California Estuaries

[Staff: Bernadette Reed]

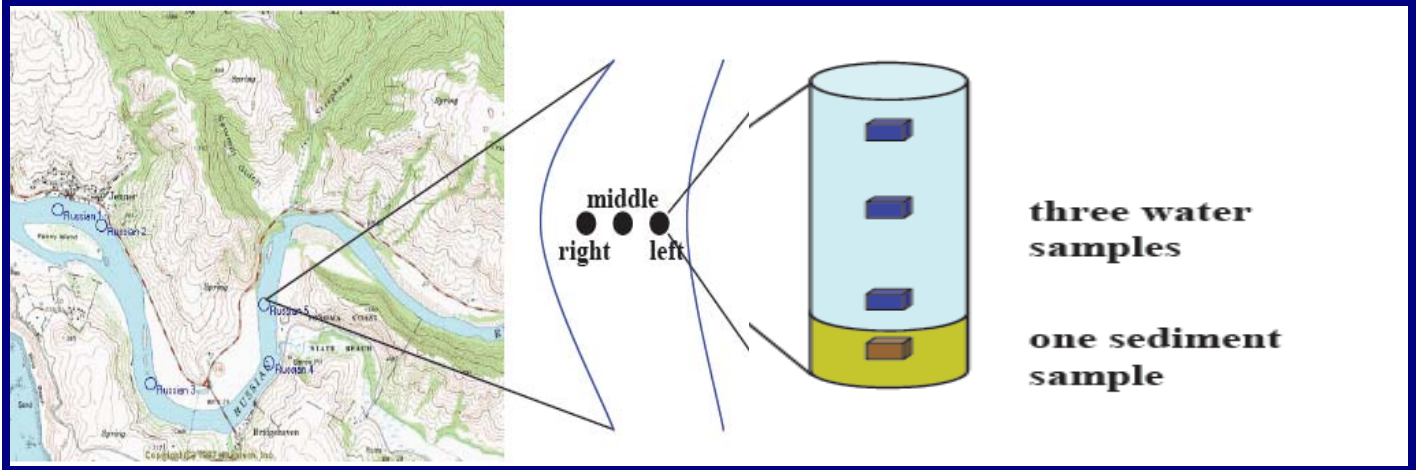
Please join us at the Regional Water Board Offices on September 19, 2006, from 9:00 am – 12:00 pm, for a workshop on bacteria research in five Marin and Sonoma County estuaries.



[Russian River Water Quality]

The State Board awarded UC Davis a grant to sample water, suspended solids, and sediment across the freshwater-saltwater transition zone at each estuary on the Russian River (see map below) ten times from August 2004 to June 2005. Samples were analyzed for fecal coliform and *E. coli*, DNA fingerprinting is also being used to differentiate bacterial populations in estuary sediment, suspended solids, and water fractions.

The results provide water quality sampling and monitoring programs with a context for the interaction between sediment and freshwater sources of bacteria, as well as salinity and seasonal influences on bacterial levels.



[Map of the Russian River Estuary]

The above map shows Russian River Estuary with the five sampling transect locations. Each transect consists of three sampling locations (right, middle, and left) from which three water samples and one sediment sample were collected.

The UC Davis staff will be discussing the results, the relationship between sediment and water column bacteria, and methods for statistical analysis.

Presenters: E. Robert Atwill, UCCE Specialist, DVM, Ph.D. and David J. Lewis, UCCE Watershed Management Advisor. If you plan on attending, please RSVP no later than September 4, 2006, to Kathy Perry at 707-565-2621.

This workshop is made possible through support from the State Water Resources Control Board and the Costa-Machado Act of 2000.